

## HOPE FOR THE FUTURE - July 5, 2020

As people, we all have basic needs – there are physical needs, emotional needs, relational needs, and spiritual needs. And there are many spiritual needs.

- As Christians we need faith, that is we need to trust God and His word.
- We need love, we need to be loved, we need to know and experience God's love.
- We need joy, for God wants us to have His joy, and be ones who are rejoicing.
- We need peace – God wants us to have His peace, and therefore, be at peace.

He wants us to be calm in our spirits, not anxious, worried or fretting.

- We need perseverance, we need to keep going, keep pursuing, and not be ones who quit.
- But there is one more thing you need, and that is hope. Each of you need hope – just as much as you need air to breathe and food to eat, you need hope.

One of the reasons I want to talk about this hope is that we are going through unprecedented times, facing unprecedented problems in our country. I have never seen anything like it, and I am planning on talking about this more in the near future. But first I want to talk about hope, I want to talk about that which is positive, encouraging, and keeps us forward looking.

As much as there are bad things going on in our country, we need to know that the time will come when everything will be infinitely better, both personally and in this world.

- Today, I want to go over a number of points that I believe will help you understand this hope, will motivate you to want this hope, and will help you to know how you can have this hope.

1. You need hope - you cannot properly live, grow and survive as a Christian without it. You can't be all that God wants you to be if you don't have hope in your heart and hope in your life. Only as you have hope will you be a truly successful and growing Christian.

2. Hope is all about the future, and having hope now means you are thinking about the future God has in store for you. We are not talking about the past or the present, but a God-planned and most glorious future. Jeremiah 29:11-12 speaks of the hopes and plans God had for the Jewish people, but it relates to us too. *"I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, 'plans for welfare and not calamity, to give you a future and a hope.'*" And so, you need to know that the future plans God has for you relates directly to the hope He wants you to have today.

3. The hope we are talking about is not worldly or fleshly, what man might achieve, but heavenly and spiritual, what only God can give you. Now as you all know, we have worldly hopes, whether that relates to your family, children, job, or health. But we are talking about godly hope, and only God can give you this hope. And this godly hope will be realized, will be fulfilled, and that's because God is always faithful, is true to His word. *"May the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely... at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He who calls you and He will bring it to pass."* 1 Thess. 5:23-24

4. The hope God has for you is described in His word, and it is only God's word that tells you about this hope God wants you to have. *"Whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures, we might have hope"* (Romans 15:4-13). Now God's word does not tell you everything about your future, but enough to really encourage and excite your heart.

5. Having hope, at its essence, is having faith, is believing God's promises about your future. And you can't have hope without faith. Now you need to have faith in God for your life here on earth, but hope means you have faith in God for what He wants to give you in the future. *"By faith he (Abraham) lived as an alien in the land of promise... for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God."* Hebrews 11:9-10

6. When we talk about hope, you need to know it can be a noun or a verb. For example, think about these words - *"Hope for the future."* Now this is both a statement and a command. As a statement, *"hope"* is a noun and is what you need to know about your future. As a command, *"hope"* is a verb and is what you need to believe about your future. And if you have no hope, it's because you don't know or don't believe what God has told you in His word.

7. At its heart, the hope God has for you is an expression of His love for you. That is, hope tells you how God will show His love to you in the future. God loves you so, so much, and therefore has planned an incredible, wonderful, and perfect future for you. *"Hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us."* Romans 5:5

8. Hope informs you that your future in heaven with Jesus Christ will be much better and brighter than your time on this earth during this present evil age. Hope tells you about the light at the end of a dark tunnel, it speaks of the goodness God has stored up for you. *"He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there shall no longer be any death; there shall no longer be any mourning, crying, or pain; the first things have passed away"* (Rev. 21:4-5). *"The day of one's death is better than the day of one's birth."* Ecclesiastes 7:1

9. To have hope means you are excited about, waiting for, and looking forward to the future. Now I'm not saying you can't be excited about things in this life, but what God wants you to be really looking forward is to the fulfillment of your hopes for the future. Think of a child who can't wait for Christmas, and getting lots of gifts. In a similar way, God wants us, His children, to be excited about seeing Christ and being with Him, and being blessed like never before. *"Fix your hope completely on the grace to be given to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."* 1 Pet. 1:13

10. The godly men and women of the past had hope - they were looking for the things God had promised them. This is what helped them to persevere, to keep going for God. This is one of the main themes in Hebrews 11, for it is all about these believers in OT times who had hope, who were looking forward to what God was going to give them in the future. *"Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it the men of old gained approval"* (Hebrews 11:1-2, 6). Having an assurance of things hoped for means you are convinced God will give you what He has promised you in His word.

11. To have endurance, to persevere as a Christian, you have to have hope. You all suffer and go through difficulties, but the God-given hope of having a better and brighter future will motivate you to keep going for Him. This will be especially true during the great tribulation, when you will be hated and persecuted like never before. Matthew 24:9, 31 - *"Then they will deliver you to tribulation and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations on account of My name (difficulties)... He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other (hope.)"*

12. Having hope doesn't mean you are supposed to just be thinking about the future. Some people might say that if you have hope you are always thinking about the future; but what having hope means is that you are living today in view of the future, with the future in mind. And you can't live rightly for God today, in the present, if you are not longing to be with the Lord, and being blessed by Him in the future. 1 Thess. 1:9-10 tells us that during our life on earth, we are to be both serving the Lord and waiting for Him. And notice what pastors are to do - *"In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of His appearing and His kingdom, preach the word."* 2 Timothy 4:1-2

13. The foundation of our hope is Jesus Christ. The Christian life is to always be centered on Christ. Phil. 1:21 says, *"to live is Christ"*, which means now and forever. And so, all aspects of your hopes, of the future God has for you, are related to Christ, whether it's worshipping Him, serving Him, being blessed by Him, or having fellowship with other Christians. *"... Christ in you, the hope of glory"* (Col. 1:27). *"... and of Christ Jesus, who is our hope."* 1 Timothy 1:1

14. Hope keeps you from worrying about the past, or being overwhelmed in the present. You will get discouraged if you are always thinking about the past or are just thinking about the present. Hope is forward looking - it helps you see that what you are doing today relates to your future in heaven, and it helps you to press ahead and make progress for the Lord. *"I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."* Phil. 3:12-14

15. One reason for trials is so that you grow in hope, so you look forward to that time when all your problems will be gone - and this looking ahead keeps you moving ahead and enables you to get through your present trial. In the middle of the storm is when you need to know that the sun

will shine again, and so too, when you are going through the storms of life, you need to believe you will see the SON. *"We exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance... and hope does not disappoint..."* Romans 5:3-5, Matt. 24:27

16. Hope helps you to not be fleshly and worldly, but to be holy. Fixing your eyes on Jesus and His coming to make you like Himself and take you home to heaven has a holy, purifying effect on your life. You see, when you are thinking about Jesus, you won't be thinking about sinning. *"When He appears, we shall be just like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is. Everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure."* 1 John 3:2-3

17. Hope relates to your salvation, for when Christ comes back, you will be glorified and your salvation will be complete. You were justified, you are now being sanctified, and in the future, you will be glorified, and fully saved. When Christ is revealed you will receive all this glorifying grace, which will make you complete and enable you to perfectly worship and serve the Lord in the ages to come. *"...having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body. For in hope we have been saved..."* Romans 8:23, 8:18-30; 1 Thess. 5:8-9

18. Hope is an anchor for your soul. That is, knowing the certainty and glories of the future helps you get through the uncertainties and problems of the present, helps you be sure and steady today. The storms of life will come, the winds will blow and the waves will pound, but the hope of a God-solid future helps to secure and stabilize your life in the present. *"This hope we have as an anchor for the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast..."* Hebrews 6:17

19. Having hope results in having joy and peace. That is, hope, joy and peace all go together. Knowing you are guaranteed a perfect and wonderful future produces real joy, peace and contentedness in your heart. *"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."* Rom 15:13

20. What is this hope God wants you to have? Here are 8 different aspects of this hope. It's being with Jesus (John 14:1). It's having a new body (1 Cor. 15:42-44). It's having a heavenly home (John 14:2-3). It's being with believers and loved ones (1 Thess. 4:13-14). It's receiving an incredible inheritance (1 Peter 1:3-4). It's having no pain, sorrow or sickness (Rev. 21:4-5). It's being greatly rewarded (Matt. 25:21). It's having fulness of joy and pleasures forever. Ps. 16:11

You need hope! Pray for it, and God will give it to you! *"I pray that the eyes of your heart are enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints"* (Eph. 1:18). *"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."* Romans 15:13